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ABSTRACT

These two papers describe the City Colleges of Chicago's (CCC's) efforts to improve their developmental programs and services. First, a series of experimental programs designed to improve students' basic skills are outlined, including: (1) programs leading to a high school diploma and subsequent CCC enrollment offered by the Chicago Urban Skills Institute; (2) the provision of support services for students in regular courses who have reading scores within two grade levels of college program requirements; and (3) three separate special developmental programs for students reading below the 10th, 7th, and 4th grade levels. Following information on the CCC's computerized student records system and financial aid policies for students enrolled in developmental education programs, fall 1983 activities are specified and their continuation justified. These activities include a summer orientation, counseling, and assistance program; early intervention and advisement procedures; a mid-term evaluation system; and an academic warning system for students below the required minimum for academic progress. The second paper sets forth a revised set of guidelines for the 1983-84 academic year for CCC's developmental education program, which attempts to establish common program elements for developmental efforts during the period, direct data gathering activities, and identify problem areas that need correction. (HB)

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A Developmental Education Program: An Experiment

Revised Guidelines for Academic Year 1983
Developmental Education Program

by

Hymen M. Chausow
and
Don Barshis

May 24, 1983

Center for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning
Chicago City Colleges, Illinois

JC 830 242

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May 24, 1983

A DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: AN EXPERIMENT

by

Hymen M. Chausow
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

A star basketball player, after attending a senior college for four years, recently received national publicity when he enrolled in a Chicago "prep school"; his reading scores were at the elementary school level. He realized that it was necessary to increase those skills before he could further his college career. Within less than one year, this young man was able to raise his reading score significantly. This action clearly demonstrates that it is to the advantage of individuals to recognize their need for prerequisite skills and corroborates Dr. Benjamin Bloom's (University of Chicago) thesis that 85 to 90 percent of the students can achieve mastery of course material if they begin with the necessary prerequisite skills.

In the City Colleges of Chicago, we have many adults who do not have the prerequisite reading skills necessary for success in the regular college program. Those who do not have the high school diploma may enroll in the Chicago Urban Skills Institute (CUSI) in programs leading to the high school diploma or GED equivalency. Upon successful completion of the CUSI program, these students may then enter one of the regular City Colleges of Chicago.

The City Colleges of Chicago has also been experimenting with a number of sequential course offerings making it possible for students with the high school diploma to succeed in their college experiences.

Those students with reading scores within two grade levels of the regular college program requirements may enroll in the regular college program. These students, using support services such as tutoring and Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO) available at the Colleges, are able to succeed in the regular college programs. Research studies nationally have underlined the important need for students to possess reading skills within two grade levels of the required reading level in their courses.

For those students reading below the 10th grade level, the experimental Individual Needs ("IN") Program revealed that students in "special assistance" classes were able to succeed : over 90 percent of these students were able to achieve good academic standing and actually re-registered the following semester in the regular college program. Full-time students in this category should be advised to register in English 100 and Reading 125 and other courses which do not have prerequisites. Most of the students in the remaining 10 percent who did not succeed read below the 7th grade level.

A special developmental education program was developed for those students reading below the 7th grade level. To date, our research shows that a majority of these students (3 out of 4), who were not having successful educational experiences before this program was implemented were in good standing at the end of the semester and were able to register for the following semester. Full-time students in this category should be advised to

register in English 98 and Reading 99 and other "non-intensive" reading courses selected after consultation with their special faculty advisors.

Instead of using CUSI for the lowest level (below 4th grade) courses or using an intensified adult education sequence this Fall, Colleges will be allowed to offer a special developmental program for these high school graduates (except "EMH" graduates). The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has transferred the approved courses classified as PCS 1.4 at CUSI (English, Reading, Speech, and Mathematics courses numbered 0001) to our regular Colleges. As a result, many of our faculty scheduled for lay-off have been recalled; however, special assignments will be made to selected faculty, as part of their regular teaching assignments for this special level. The experimentation with the revised developmental program will be in effect for one year.

The Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago (FCCCC), through its Curriculum Committee, has recommended a procedure using our computerized student records system to store prerequisites. This would ensure that all students are properly placed in those courses for which they have the necessary prerequisite skills. This will enable us to maintain course standards. Thus, the placement test a student is given will help determine the proper level course that he/she would need. For example, a student reading at the 7th grade level would not be allowed to register for an advanced course in anthropology.

Matching the student with courses for which he/she has the necessary prerequisite skills would also ensure financial aid assistance, without which students on the lower socio-economic scale would be unable to attend college. Because a federal regulation denies financial aid to any student on academic probation, it is imperative that early intervention takes place to ensure the student's success. It is also important to know that in the financial aid package the students are allowed to enroll in developmental courses necessary to develop their prerequisite skills (up to 24 credit hours) without eliminating their four-year eligibility for funding toward the baccalaureate degree. That is, students are able to continue to receive financial aid as long as they are making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

Given the above, it is important that the following steps continue to be implemented for Fall 1983:

1. Our orientation, counseling, and placement program in the Summer should be continued for those students who plan to attend the City Colleges in the Fall. The evidence is very clear that students who receive this orientation and assessment and are placed in the proper courses do maintain a significantly higher satisfactory progress rate over those who do not receive this kind of support.

2. The earliest intervention must occur before grades are awarded at the end of the Fall semester. This means that faculty advisement and support services in the form of tutors, corrective learning experiences, PLATO, etc., be used throughout the term. The evidence is also clear that the first few weeks of each course are crucial. The effective teacher is one who takes an interest in the student, provides immediate "feedback" and is well organized. It is interesting to note that the typical lecture/discussion

approach to college instruction followed by most faculty members results in a high correlation between aptitude and achievement. That is, students at the low end of an aptitude test receive low grades and those at the upper end receive the A and B grades. As Professor Bloom has demonstrated, if the intervention by the effective teacher takes place, then the correlation between aptitude and achievement approaches zero.

3. The Mid-Term Education Program (MEP) is designed for students who have not received at least a grade of C in a course at mid-term. Because all faculty members must now evaluate students at mid-term and assign a grade of A to F, it is possible to identify those students who are not making satisfactory progress (receiving at least a C grade) and give them additional help. This may take the form of a personal invitation to attend the Learning Resource Center at the College or to participate in a special adult education support course. In both instances, our research studies show significant retention and achievement results after students have received this assistance.

4. Students who, at the end of the semester, still maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) below the required minimum for satisfactory progress will be allowed to re-register for one semester on academic warning. During this semester, financial aid may be received. At the end of that academic warning semester, the students must return to "good standing" in order to continue to receive financial aid. If students do not achieve the required GPA, they will either be placed on academic probation or excluded. Therefore, it is important for the Colleges to institute a special program for those students on academic warning. The maximum number of hours for such enrollment would be 12, but at least three of these hours (or more) should be used to repeat the course or courses in which the student did not succeed.

Our policy is not to average the grades received in the same course, but to use the last grade received. That is, if the student fails and then he/she repeats the course and receives a C grade, only the C will be used in computing the GPA. The Illinois Community College Board's policy allows a student to repeat a course once in which he/she does not receive at least a C grade. City Colleges does receive State Aid for the single repetition.

When results from Fall 1978 are compared to those from Fall 1982, the City Colleges of Chicago experienced an increase in retention and achievement of 9 percent, primarily because of the efforts described above.

It is our firm intention to see that our students succeed in the City Colleges of Chicago.

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HMC/rn

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CCC

Center for the
Improvement
of Teaching
and Learning

May 24, 1983

TO: All College Presidents

ATTENTION: Vice Presidents for Faculty and Instruction
Deans of Instruction
Department Chairpersons
Counselors
Coordinators of Remedial/Development Programs
President of FCCC

FROM: Don Barshis, Executive Director

APPROVED: Dr. Hymen Chausow, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Revised Guidelines for Academic Year 1983 Developmental Education Program

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On March 4, 1983, I issued a set of guidelines designed to systematize our developmental education program efforts in the areas of assessment, placement, curriculum, and support services. The guidelines were to have begun in the Fall 1983 term. We have decided, for a number of reasons, to defer full implementation of that program for one year as we conduct specific research on issues like placement cut-off scores and student achievement in relation to reading levels of course materials. We also need to develop new curriculum; devise alternate forms of academic support service in these times of budget cutbacks; and enlist the full cooperation of faculty, support staff, administration, and students (where feasible) to design the most effective developmental program possible for Fall, 1984 system-wide implementation. In the meantime, we will continue with a number of programs and services that have proven themselves, experiment with new approaches to meet the developmental needs of our students, and collect data so that we may document all our findings and build our program on a sound factual base. Thus, I've prepared a revised set of guidelines for this coming 1983 experimental year. My intent is to establish common program elements in our developmental efforts during 1983, direct our data gathering activities, and identify those problems areas that need our combined energies to correct.

Assessment and Placement

1. We will continue with the requirement that all new students wishing to take six or more hours or any student wishing to take a course for which there is a placement test, language, or math prerequisite must be properly assessed. Minimum assessment for new students includes placement testing in reading and writing, with math testing for all students expecting to enter the math sequence or a program requiring math competency. If a college wishes to tighten this requirement to include more students or to require math testing of all new students, it is free to do so. Accurate records on SPAS should be kept of student placement test scores. Colleges should also ensure that the best possible testing conditions are present during each period of registration, including late registration. Test-givers -- whether faculty, counselors, or project staff -- should be trained and knowledgeable about the examination, and the security of testing materials should be assured.

2. We also will continue to use reading grade levels to determine placement into the different levels of reading courses, though there is a change in both the cut-off scores used and the curriculum. Because of the conflicting data on student achievement relative to initial reading level, we have decided to allow a one grade variation at the entry level of Reading 99, thus making the entry reading level grades 4.0 to 6.9 on the California Reading Test (Form 19C, 1977 Edition). We also recommend that the college give a non-timed reading test to all students reading below the 4th grade on the California. We have provided the colleges with sufficient copies of the Gates-McGinitie Test, a non-timed reading test used with good results by Wright College. The purpose of the non-timed test is to corroborate or correct the initial placement recommendation for reading and to assure that costly or unnecessary revisions can be eliminated. Reading grade levels will be used to place students in the appropriate reading course in the sequence: below 4.0 in Reading 001, between 4.0 and 7.0 in Reading 99, and between 7.0 and 10.0 in Reading 125. Reading 126 will be reserved for students reading at or above the 10th grade level and is a college transferable course.

While writing and math placement instruments currently in use by CCC do not discriminate according to grade level, they have proven reliable (according to their respective department chairpersons) in placing students in the appropriate course in the writing (English 001, 98, and 100) or math (001, 89, and 100) sequence at the developmental level. (Note: English 103 and Math 103 are no longer in use.) Along with the reading tests, the colleges should use both an English (writing) test and a math test -- both with proven reliability -- in placing students in the writing and math sequences. Scores on a reading test alone should not be the sole basis for assigning people to writing and math levels, even though there is often a correlation between reading and other placement test scores.

If, after careful assessment, misplacement of students still occurs, each college should have provisions for <u>early</u> revision of misplaced students into the appropriate curricula.

3. In our previous set of guidelines, students testing below the 5th grade in reading (and at similar levels in writing and math) would begin their CCC education in a special set of experimental courses taught by CUSI at each of the colleges. We have revised our recommendations in light of the difficulties students would face in receiving financial aid for those CUSI-taught courses to bring this experimental program back to the colleges, to set the placement level at below 4th grade reading level (with appropriate levels in writing and math), and to develop curriculum and methodology to recognize that these are students who have had twelve years of formal schooling that have had little appreciable effect in preparing the students for post-secondary education. Faculty who choose to work in this program and are recommended by their local administration will be given special assignments and will not, therefore, be subject to "bumping" by faculty with higher seniority. These faculty will also receive support to develop effective curricula and teaching methodology and will make use of new instructional technology, such as the AVT systems furnished by the Public Building Commission at several of the colleges. The challenge of working with colleagues to develop effective learning experiences for a group of students ill-served by their formal public education to date will be hard to meet, but intrinsically satisfying for serious education professionals. Our commitment to serve these students with our college resources is a major reason for the return of a significant number of our RIF'd faculty in English, and we look for a corresponding increase of commitment from our faculty to warrant our decision.

4. Students entering without high school completion should register at CUSI, except for those students who can meet the requirements for courses and programs available at the colleges and who are approved for entry by the local President.

5. The assessment and placement of ESL students is being worked on by the joint efforts of CCC English Department chairpersons and the specially trained ESL Program Coordinators and faculty at Loop and Truman Colleges. All ESL students who have not completed high school or its equivalent are to be referred to CUSI's ESL Program.

6. The completion of programs for students who are taking developmental courses in communications (and mathematics) should be governed by at least three key principles: a. Student Program Interest -- Counselors and advisors should question students as to their interest and use appropriate level courses directly in the interest area or clearly related to that area as principal choices: b. Course Prerequisites -- Courses with higher language prerequisites than the level of the developmental communications course that student has placed into are inappropriate completer courses for the student's program (e.g. Data Processing 101 and Psychology 201 have English 101 qualification). This gets more complicated with 200 level courses such as Humanities 201, Business 211, and Sociology 201 which have no language prerequisite but which are intended as advanced level or sophomore courses because of their difficult reading levels and/or writing expectations. These kinds of courses are not appropriate for developmental reading and writing students; c. Reading and Writing Intensiveness -- Courses in which students are required to read difficult materials and write sophisticated

reports or research papers are also not appropriate for program completion for students enrolled in Reading 001, 99, and 125 or English 001, 98, and 100. Some colleges have had success with developing new curricula or revising existing curricula in courses such as Social Science 88 and 105, Humanities 100 and 107, Business 100 and 110, Child Development 100, and Biology 100 to match the reading and writing curricula at the developmental level.

We recommend that special faculty counselors and advisors who are familiar with the skill levels of developmental students and the various curricula handle the registration advisement of developmental students, especially those who test below 7th grade in reading, in order to ensure preparation of the most effective student programs. Good academic judgment must determine the propriety of course options for developmental studies students so that we give every one of our students the right to succeed rather than to fail.

Finally, the academic administration at the colleges must oversee the implementation of CCC policy on the use of the "Consent of Chairperson" override. Written conditions under which the "CC" may be used should be on file at the college, and any exceptions should be approved by the Vice President for Faculty and Instruction or his/her designee.

Experimentation

The 1983-84 Academic Year will be devoted to productive research and experimentation on developmental education programming and curricula. We need to assess the effectiveness of these curricula, develop and modify courses where needed, continue our review of course prerequisites--especially from the perspective of communication skills needed for entry, and open lines of communication about the program and its results to all involved parties of the City Colleges. When the program is thoroughly researched and properly formulated, it will begin formally throughout the Colleges. Our planning date for implementation is Fall 1984.

The principal areas of research and experimentation are as follows:

1. Program Design. The Colleges can experiment with a number of approaches to serving the needs of developmental students. They can continue the successful programming approach that integrates communications core courses with appropriate completer courses into effective pre-designed 4-course programs. The main advantages of this approach are the combination of curricula and teacher interaction to address common student problems and provision of a focus for academic support services in a year of major cutbacks in the Colleges' Disadvantaged Student Grant allocations. Colleges might also develop innovative interdisciplinary programs that use writing and reading across the curriculum approaches to improve student learning outcomes. Faculty on special assignments can create and deliver effective individualized or lab approaches to developmental learning, especially at those schools that have recently received AVT Individualized Learning Lab programs (TR, OH, LO and DA).

2. Curriculum. New curriculum needs to be developed for the following courses--Developmental Reading 001 (for below 4th grade readers), English 001 (for students writing at a level below English 98), Speech 001 (for students working below the entry level expectations of Speech 100), Business 100, Humanities 100 (the objectives and recommended texts have been developed already; specific course outlines still must be formulated), and Math 001 and 89. Further curriculum development is needed in college transfer courses that have been used with some success to complete programs centered around Reading 125/English 100 (formerly 103)--Social Science 105, Humanities 107, and Business 110. Also major rethinking/reworking of curricula in ESL is needed.

3. Data-gathering. We need to know how well our college faculty can serve students who test below the 4th grade in reading. Also, can students reading between the 4th and 5th grade levels succeed in the Reading 99/English 98 core plus additional non-reading/writing intensive courses? Similarly, can students reading between 9th and 10th grade succeed in general ed courses when compared with students who take less reading intensive elective courses to complete their programs? To all of these ends, we recommend that each of the colleges set up a procedure for identifying students by their reading grade levels and studying their performance in the various programs for which they are registered, CITL will work with the colleges to establish some common procedures for the reporting of data, so that we will have a basis for recommending cut-off scores to govern placement in the Fall 84 term.

4. Academic Support Services. With budget cutbacks on DSG-funded academic support services, each college must set its priorities for the scarce dollars that will be made available to each college. Obviously, tutoring and counseling assistance should have the highest priority. Other college resources, whether work-study money, volunteer efforts, creative packaging of faculty advisement hours, adult education workshops, and the like, should be utilized. Faculty might choose to assume the burden for testing, orientation, and tutoring/lab assistance at those colleges where much of that responsibility has been borne by project personnel. The more creative a college can be in defining and addressing its support service needs, the better our students will be served. If additional monies become available, we will recommend a high priority for support services. In the meanwhile, we have to work together to meet our students' need for supplemental help. Forty-eight new PLATO units are being made available, and, as mentioned, several of the colleges are acquiring effective learning resource aids through Public Building Commission-funded AVT Learning Lab equipment and software.

In our efforts to investigate, document, and recommend an educational program that has both the support of our college community and the best educational interests of our students at its heart, we need to work together during this next year to reach consensus on that program's design. Let the coming academic year be a time for such an effort. All of us will benefit.

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